

## Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 ACDA-05 MC-02 COME-00 AID-05

IGA-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /064 W  
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O R 031124Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7685

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INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 2279

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, TH

SUBJECT: FY77 MILITARY SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: THAILAND

REF: (A) BANGKOK 2090 (DTG 301243Z JAN 76)

(B) BANGKOK 1684 (DTG 261236Z JAN 76)

(C) STATE 017013 (DTG 230319Z JAN 76)

1. THE FOLLOWING IS IN RESPONSE TO PARA 7, REF C.

2. THIS LAST YEAR HAS SEEN PROFOUND CHANGES IN THE POLITICAL CONFIGURATION AND MILITARY BALANCE IN THIS REGION. THE HOSTILITIES IN VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA HAVE ENDED WITH THE DEFEAT OF THE US-BACKED GOVERNMENTS IN THOSE COUNTRIES, AND THE COLAITION GOVERNMENT OF LAOS HAS CRUMBED BEFORE THE POLITICAL ASSAULT OF THE PATHET LAO. THE WITHDRAWAL OF US COMBAT FORCES FROM THAILAND BEGUN LAST MARCH IS NEARING COMPLETION. IN THE MIDST OF THESE NEW REALITIES, EXTERNAL AND SELF-IMPOSED, THAILAND IS GRAPPLING WITH ITS SHAKY EXPERIMANT IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT AND THE LONG NEGLECTED SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF ITS PEOPLE.

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3. IT REMAINS US POLICY, DESPITE THESE CHANGES, TO HONOR

OUR MANILA PACT COMMITMENT TO THAILAND, WHOSE STABILITY AND CONTINUED INDEPENDENCE WILL MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE FUTURE EVOLUTION OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. WITHIN THE BROADER POLICY CONTEXT, THE FOLLOWING ARE THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:

- ASSIST IN MAINTAINING THE CREDIBILITY OF OUR COMMITMENT TO THAILAND, THUS UNDERPINNING THE FUTURE US MILITARY PRESENCE, PARTICULARLY OUR INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION FACILITIES;
- ASSIST THE RTG IN DEVELOPING THE CAPABILITY TO SUPPRESS THE COMMUNIST INSURGENCE AND MAINTAIN INTERNAL SECURITY;
- PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THAI MILITARY CAPABILITIES TO DEFEND AGAINST LIMITED EXTERNAL MILITARY THREAT;
- PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR COST-EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS THAT DEVELOP THAI MILITARY SELF-SUFFICIENCY.

4. IT IS NOT OUR INTENTION, NOR SHOULD IT BE, TO ATTEMPT TO CREATE A THAI MILITARY FORCE STRUCTURE IN OUR IMAGE. THAT IS NEITHER POSSIBLE, GIVEN THAI RESOURCES AND CURRENT SECURITY ASSISTANCE LEVELS, NOR APPROPRIATE TO THAI DEFENSE NEEDS. HOWEVER, IN ORDER FOR THE THAI TO CONTINUE TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN SELF-DEFENSE CAPABILITIES, THEIR OWN MILITARY PRODUCTION FACILITIES AND THEIR OWN MANAGEMENT AND TECHNICAL TRAINING PROGRAMS, US ASSISTANCE IS STILL NEEDED.

5. THE ROYAL THAI ARMED FORCES HAVE OBTAINED A REASONABLE LEVEL OF COMPETENCY TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH THEIR DUAL MISSION OF COUNTERINSURGENCY AND CONVENTIONAL BORDER DEFENSE. ALTHOUGH NOT ABLE, FOR POLITICAL AS MUCH AS MILITARY REASONS, TO SUPPRESS THE INSURGENCE TOTALLY, THEY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CONTAIN IT WITHIN ITS TRADITIONAL MOUNTAIN STRONGHOLDS. A PROLONGED ATTACK ACROSS THE BORDER BY THE NORTH VIETNAMESE OR NORTH VIETNAMESE BACKED FORCES WOULD BE BEYOND THE ABILITY OF THE RTARF TO WITHSTAND. HOWEVER, AS DEMONSTRATED RECENTLY ALONG THE MEKONG RIVER AND THE CAMBODIAN BORDER, THEY ARE ABLE TO MAKE A CREDIBLE SHOW OF STRENGTH. WITH CONTINUED US SECURITY ASSISTANCE THIS DUAL CAPABILITY CAN BE MAINTAINED AND POSSIBLY

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IMPROVED.

6. THROUGH SECURITY ASSISTANCE SUPPORT, THE THAI HAVE DEVELOPED AND ARE EXPANDING THEIR SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN PRODUCTION, MAINTENANCE AND TRAINING. A DOZEN MAJOR FACILITIES WERE BEGUN AND ARE SUPPORTED UNDER THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, INCLUDING A DRY CELL BATTERY PLANT, A VEHICLE REBUILD PLANT, A SMALL ARMS AMMUNITION PLANT, AND AIRCRAFT ENGINE, HELICOPTER AND NAVAL

ORDNANCE AND DOCKYARD MAINTENANCE FACILITIES. THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE TRAINING PROGRAM HAS EFFECTIVELY TRAINED MANY RTARF OFFICERS AND ENLISTED PERSONNEL IN MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY ORIENTED TOWARDS TEACHING SKILLS TO ALLOW THE THAI TO DEVELOP AND RUN THEIR OWN TRAINING PROGRAMS. ALTHOUGH THAILAND CAN NEVER BECOME FULLY SELFRELIANT, THESE PROGRAMS, TAKEN AS A WHOLE, CAN GO A LONG WAY IN ASSISTING THE THAI TO PROCURE, PRODUCE, MANAGE AND MAINTAIN THEIR OWN DEFENSE FORCE. ON A MORE INTANGIBLE LEVEL, THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM HAS BEEN AND CONTINUES TO BE VIEWED BY THAI, CIVILIAN AND MILITARY ALIKE, AS A MEANINGFUL BAROMETER OF OUR CONCERN AND COMMITMENT TO THEIR FURURE.

7. THAILAND HAS ADEQUATE SOURCES OF ECONOMIC AID TO ASSIST IN ITS DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS FROM THE US, THIRD COUNTRIES, AND INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS. WE HAVE BEEN GRADUALLY PHASING OUR OUR CONCESSIONAL AID OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS AND ARE NOW CONCENTRATING ON SUPPORT OF FAMILY PLANNING, NARCOTICS CONTROL, SELECTIVE LOANS AIMED AT IMPROVING THE INCOME OF THE POOR AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER. THE WORLD BANK, THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, AND JAPAN AR ALL LARGER DONORS OF ECONOMIC AID TO THAILAND. THE WORLD BANK FROM 1973-75 CONTRIBUTED \$265 MILLION FOR THAILAND AND FOR 1976 IS CONSIDERING A COMMITMENT OF ANOTHER \$135 MILLION. AMONG THE PROJECTS ARE MAJOR IRRIGATION SYSTEMS, LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT AND RUBBER REPLANTING. THE ADB IS PREPARED TO INCREASE ITS CURRENT COMMITMENT LEVEL OF \$80 MILLION A YEAR IF THAILAND WILL SUBMIT SOUND, WELL-PREPARED PROJECTS. JAPAN'S AID, ALTHOUGH UNTIED, IS GIVEN WITH ITS COMMERCIAL AND POLITICAL INTERESTS ALWAYS IN VIEW.

8. THUS, WHILE THAILAND HAS ALTERNATE SOURCES OF DEVELOPMENTAL AID, IT HAS NO ALTERNATE SOURCE OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE. ECONOMIC AND SECURITY ASSISTANCE ARE MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE TO  
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THAILAND'S FUTURE, BUT THEY ARE NOT FUNGIBLE. US SECURITY ASSISTANCE, FOR BOTH TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE REASONS, IS NECESSARY. WE STRONGLY SUPPORT THE EXTENSION OF US SECURITY ASSISTANCE, BOTH GRANT AND CREDIT, TO THAILAND AS PROPOSED FOR FY77.  
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